



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
TENNESSEE COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
WWW.STATE.TN.US/HUMANSERV/TCDHH.HTM
CITIZENS PLAZA STATE OFFICE BUILDING, 14TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-6000
Telephone: (615) 313-4896 ♦ TTY: 1-800-270-1349 ♦ Fax: (615) 532-4685 FAX
E-Mail: Thom.Roberts@state.tn.us

PHIL BREDESEN
Governor

VIRGINIA T. LODGE
Commissioner

TCDHH COUNCIL MEETING
League for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
November 14, 2008

Members Present: Dana Hughes (Chair), Paulette Melton (Vice Chair), Assistant Commissioner Andrea Cooper, Executive Director Thom Roberts, Kim Dance, Lordy Smith, Alan Mealka and Lygia Williams,

I. Welcome & Announcements & Introductions

Dana welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Dana asked for the councils' support in representing all of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, and Late-Deafened of Tennessee as chair of the Council. Dana stated that, in February, he would bring a plan forward for advocacy and productivity as part of the council's five year plan. He hopes to have a creative and productive retreat with the outcome being an effective five year plan.

Guest, Sandy Cohen: The Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing took a 50% cut in funding this fiscal year. The library is now down to two staff members, one other staff person and me. As a result of that, the library is limiting public service hours to 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, or by appointment.

In 2001, when funding was completely cut, the entire community called their legislators, everybody wrote letters and it worked really well. The library will probably be asking for that help again.

Every time the library has gone to the legislature to seek funding, the legislators tell us they never hear from this community. If you don't go and if you're not active with your legislators, they're not going to know that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind community needs anything.

The library has the largest collection of materials relating to hearing loss and deafness in a public library in the entire country. There are at least 12,000 or so different titles, including books, D.V.D.'s, C.D.Roms, videotapes, magazines, all different kinds of materials that are loaned to the public. The library also displays and loans out assistive devices.

II. Review of Previous meetings minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed.

Lordy asked that the Black Deaf Advocates workshop be changed to *not* being limited to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Lygia made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction.

Paulette seconded the motion.

The motion was accepted.

III. Division of Rehabilitation Report, Andrea Cooper, Assistant Commissioner

We've had a lot of budget discussions with the projected revenue shortfall. We have done some shifting of functions in the State offices since the voluntary buyout and things have been moving smoothly.

Six of our counselors graduated from the master's program in May. The one significant change that R.S.A. recommended in our plan was that a qualified counselor be one who holds a master's in rehabilitation counseling or a related field. Even though there is a hiring freeze at the State, we do have a blanket exemption for the counselor position, which hopefully won't interrupt services for our Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

As mentioned before, we have 4,888 remaining on the waiting list at the end of fiscal year 2008. With the 2,138 on the priority category two waiting list it is the Vocational Rehabilitation division's goal to be able, in the near future, to have priority two open.

In talking with the State Rehabilitation Council, one of the topics that has been mentioned is applying an economic needs test to tuition and training. We are also

critiquing the current needs test. We hope with the new revised economic needs policy we will save significant funds allowing us to serve others.

We are also looking at doing some web-based training for our Vocational Rehabilitation staff, and all of the division staff in order to provide good services. The new system we are considering will have to be accessible and usable for our staff that are deaf and/or blind.

Kim Williams from Chattanooga is the new chairperson for the State Rehabilitation Council. She has been a member of the State Rehabilitation Council for approximately a year, and was elected chairperson in October.

Susie Tucker and Lee Ann Smith, with the Department of Finance and Administration Consulting Services, have met with Dana, Thom and Terry. They are going to work with this council to help identify and accomplish your goals and strategies.

Dana: In February we're asking you to come in a day early to the retreat. There are several things that we hope to accomplish. Between now and February you will need to think about the things that you would like to see this council accomplish. We need to figure out what our top priorities are.

IV. Council Member Reports

Alan Mealka:

Tomorrow is the annual statewide workshop on deafness. Its focus is parents, teachers, and other professionals serving deaf and hard of hearing children. This is the 12th annual conference, and it is at the school for the blind from 8:30 to 3:30.

November 26 is our annual fundraiser or pancake and sausage day at the school from 6:30 a.m. until noon. It raises a lot of money for our parent teacher council organization which also supports our school.

The Viking basketball tournament is at Tennessee School for the Deaf on December 26. We have Tennessee and Kentucky teams coming for basketball and socialization.

Lygia Williams:

The office of Mental Health Disabilities lost two complete offices due to the buyout. The duties of the consumer affairs office are being absorbed by a new Director, who is very interested in the mental health needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

We have a Garrett Lee Smith youth suicide prevention grant which deals with gatekeeper suicide awareness training to adults that work with high-risk youth in the various systems, foster care, juvenile justice, et cetera. We also wrote another grant and received it. It is for youth suicide prevention in the juvenile justice population. We will be doing suicide -- advanced suicide awareness training for all of the staff in the juvenile justice system but we're also going to be doing things with the youth who are in juvenile justice. One of the projects

is youth suicide awareness where we're helping these youth identify and recognize when their peers are suicidal and knowing what to do in terms of telling a counselor or teacher, et cetera.

The Assistant Commissioner over Juvenile Justice is evaluating the number of youth who may be Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I will need help to find ways to make sure these individuals get the same services that other youth receive.

One of the regions for Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network in the east part of the state is focusing totally on the deaf and hard of hearing and the mental health needs and looking at suicide prevention for that community, which is a huge step. Out of that there is the formation of a new State national council for mental health on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Paulette Melton:

I would like to remind our council members and also the people here that work with the deaf, and hard of hearing, maybe even elderly or disabled, that this is open enrollment for Medicare RX and now is the time to redo or reanalyze the Medicare RX, or their prescription drug plan.

For those individuals that need assistance for property tax, landowners that cannot pay their property tax, or for heating assistance, please make sure to refer them either to the local DHS office or to their property tax assessor. On the back of their card is a phone number that they can contact called tax relief.

There are new numbers and websites for those Tennesseans who may have lost their jobs; www.cover.tn.gov, 1-866-and the word cover TN. Another one is resources for uninsured in Tennessee; 1-888-486-9355. Their website is www.tnhealthoptions.org

Lordy Smith:

The Memphis Chapter of Black Deaf Advocates continues to be active in the community and the NBDA, INC., which is in Washington, DC. They are planning a workshop, and continue to do fund raising.

MCTAD is planning to host the Tennessee Deaf Expo in 2010 and are starting their search for a location. The planning process is getting underway for the Expo.

East Memphis Quota Club is having their annual festival and fashion show.

Kim Dance:

We recently went to the Knoxville Deaf Expo, which was very successful, with about 1,000 in attendance. There were different activities such as a drama and theatrical workshop, and a deaf group from Russia came and presented their play.

Tennessee Association of the Deaf went to Memphis for their departmental board meeting. Their top priority is mental health.

Laurie Pullins: (Report read by Thom Roberts)

August 21-22, University of Tennessee board of trustees approved the plan to allow the U.T. department of audiology and speech program and clinics to continue under the U.T. health

services center, college of allied health services in Memphis. This department will remain in Knoxville and the change will be effective July 1, 2009.

Laurie serves as president of H.L.A. of Knoxville. The meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month. We've moved to a new location at Ebenezer United Methodist Church which is located at 1001 Ebenezer Road in Knoxville. The meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. Transcribing services are also provided. November 13 is the H.L.A.A. of Knoxville meeting, Wilderwood Service Dogs will be speaking about their service dog program.

Future plans include a Christmas party on December 11 at H.L.A.A. of Knoxville at 7:00 p.m. at the Ebenezer United Methodist Church. People with a hearing loss and supporters are invited and are asked to bring a snack or finger food to share with others.

The 2009 Hearing Loss Association of America convention will be held at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee and will be held on June 18-21, 2009. Planning is underway for this great event.

V. Executive Director's Report, Thom Roberts

August

- 12 Legislature Sub-Committee Hearing on TCDHH regarding the Sunset Law
- 14 Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) Regional Mtg
- 26 LDHH Open House Welcoming Sallie Hussey
- 29 TRC Graduation
Doug Hardman from National Deaf Academy

September

- 11 Preferred Alternatives, Inc. Neill Guy met with Lygia Williams and me regarding mental health services for the Deaf Community
- 12-14 Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators Annual Conference
- 16 Emergency Preparedness Committee Meeting
- 18-19 TSPN Symposium
- 23 Deaf Deaf World sponsored by LDHH
- 25-27 National Alliance on Mental Illness State Convention, Memphis

October

- 8 Disability Determination Services-TTY and Relay Training
- 11 Northeast Tennessee Deaf Activities, "Deaf Awareness Banquet"
- 14 TSPN-Intra-State Departmental Meeting
- 18 CelSign (Celebration of Sign Language)
- 21-25 Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (Atlanta, Georgia)

November

- 6 NexTalk video phone relay/interpreting demonstration
- 13 TSPN Regional Meeting

Terry Smith: I just wanted to comment, follow up on what Tom said about the sunset review that took place in the legislature. Thom had to provide a large volume of material for them to review. He had to provide minutes for all of the council meetings, and it just so happened that last year we didn't have a quorum at several of the meetings and that was really the only issue that the legislature expressed a lot of concern about, that we were having meetings and we weren't having quorums. I just say that so you know people are looking at that and how important it is that you be active and that you're here for the meetings.

Andrea Cooper: Echoing Terry's reminder that the issue of attendance and quorum is important, the issue of filling vacancies in a timely manner is important also and that's an ongoing process for the councils.

I don't want Thom, Terry or me to be the ones appointing members because it's your council. So please keep in mind, if there are people in the community who would be good council members. Let's keep a list and keep their information so when an opportunity opens we can get them nominated right away.

VI. Center Reports

Bob Rittenhouse, KCD, www.kcdtn.org:

- Each year at the members' meeting, the community selects five new directors so next month we'll have five new directors coming on and five rotating off.
- We're projected to finish about 33% ahead of last year's interpreting income. And our grant income is up by \$25,000 this year.
- We had our annual golf tournament in September. That money is used to support our Deaf-Blind program. We netted \$5,000. Our Deaf-Blind program is supporting the empowerment of the Deaf-Blind community.
- Our youth program is in its fourth year. We hold classes every three weeks. It's really a joint program between K.C.D. and T.S.D.
- At the end of this month Dana and I will be involved in a national teleconference and we'll be reporting on the K.C.D. Deaf -Blind program.
- This is our second year of the needy family program and essentially we raise money from around September until Thanksgiving and then we help families with their gas and their food expenses with the money we're able to extend to them.
- We also had our first rummage sale this year and did well with that. We've raised about \$2,200 for the needy family program this year already.
- Our retirement village project has been for lack of a better words plotting along for about seven years. They're going to add a wing to the Hillcrest south nursing home and it will be modeled after the greenhouse, which is kind of an open family type environment, and it will be dedicated to use by deaf and Deaf-Blind people in need of nursing care.

- In relation to the K.C.D. staff, we do have one interpreting vacancy. Terry Osborne moved from an interpreting position to the Director of Community Services and we will begin trying to fill that position around March or April. Our mentor interpreting position, which we established a year ago, which is a position to support a recent graduate of an interpreter training program for one year, will be vacated in May and we'll bring in a new recent graduate into that program.
- And then finally, we'll have our first deaf intern at K.C.D. who's going to be graduating from NTID in graphic design. We will share that intern with Scripps Network in town and with ETTAC which is a local Technology Access Center.

Jessica Harrison, CCDHH, www.frontierhealth.org

- I am the new Program Coordinator at Communication Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Johnson City. Caroline Holland was not able to return from medical leave, and will be missed. I have been with CCDHH since April, 2007 as a staff interpreter.
- In August CCDHH met with Paula Nicely and Lana Newton, the Deaf-Blind Coordinator, to learn and discuss what service options are going to be available for our community.
- In September we started teaching A.S.L. classes at TRC in Elizabethton. The classes are being taught in 30 minute time blocks to work with schedules at TRC.
- The NETDA cookbook is in its final review process and that should be ready for printing soon. It's been in the works for over a year now and will be available soon.
- We've just completed our level I and level IV classes.
- In October we've worked for and to help East Tennessee Deaf activities group, NETDA to prepare for the Deaf Awareness Week activities. Thom was able to come and speak. We had a good time with activities all week.
- We also had a radio spot on WKPT so we could talk about the DAW events. We gave information on how the community could support DAW in 2009, and talked about the services the CCDHH offers in the community.

Linda Lawson, PCFA, www.partnershipfca.com

- We have a job placement coordinator, Sharon Bryant, through a grant with vocational rehabilitation and that is going extremely well. Out of 23 individuals placed in jobs, probably 8 of them have passed their 90-day retention. She has been on board with us since November of last year.
- Two of my staff attended the NAMI conference and they were just blown away with Steve Hamerdinger. We're working to bring him to Tennessee. We're hoping that's going to happen in the spring of next year.

- We are one of the three centers that is set up a little bit differently. We are a program component of a larger agency so we received a case manager, Becky Harrington, who started in June, and we are fully staffed. There are three Deaf people on our staff.
- As everybody knows there's a shortage of interpreters all across the state. Sorenson is opening up a center it seems every other week. I think their goal by the end of the year is going to be 100 and they're at 70 at this point. So we started a new mentoring program and I've asked Darwin Ayscue to speak with you about that.

Darwin Ayscue: I've been at the service center working with Linda 25 years, and through the years we've been doing mentoring informally but we started doing it more formally. We have four active interpreter mentees. In a nutshell, we're requiring the interpreters to have X amount of interpreting assignments, whether that's interpreting or teaming or observing. They also have to have scheduled mentoring interpreting, shadow with our case manager during the program, mentoring sessions with myself, and they have to shadow with job specialists.

Sallie Hussey, LDHH, www.ldhh.org

- We are now the League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Ear Foundation. We officially merged in September. The word Ear stands for Education and Auditory Research Foundation.
- We've had some staff additions, partially because of the merger. Please welcome Nikki Ringenberg, Joseph Ochoa, and Trina Baylor.
- Laurie Cribb, one of our amazing interpreters, just passed her N.I.C. master's certification and we're thrilled and really honored that Laurie is part of us. Laurie has worked really hard to develop a series of classes starting the last Saturday in February. It's for certified interpreters who are preparing for the specialist certificate legal exam.
- We have had three of the best months we've ever in terms of interpreting. Eric and many of our interpreting staff have worked really diligently to find us some interpreting scheduling and billing software.
- February 22 will be the health fair. It will be at St. Thomas and we're still in the process of recruiting booths. It will be Sunday afternoon from 1:00 to 5:00, maybe 1:00 to 6:00. Career day is on Tuesday.

Amy Cone, JCIL, www.jcil.tn.org

- I was invited to attend and judge CelSign Auditions in Nashville on August 16th. I was glad to be able to be a part of it.
- The Friends of WTSD meetings started back up this month.
- A student that we interpreted for graduated from the HVAC program. The whole staff attended.
- We started teaching an ASL class at Union University on September 15th, and are very excited about it.

- Our DAW banquet was on September 20th, with 120 participants. Mike Turner from GoAmerica came out to present and join us.

Memphis:

Not present, no report submitted.

VII. Old Business and New Business:

There was no old business.

New business:

Upcoming Council meeting dates are listed below:

February 12-13 (RETREAT, CCDHH will provide breakfast)

May 8 (TAD will provide breakfast)

August 14 (JCIL will provide breakfast)

November 13 (breakfast to be determined)

Jennifer Thorpe:

I'm here to speak about the HLAA convention in 2009.

HLAA is an organization that focuses primarily on advocacy and informing people with hearing loss about their options.

There are workshops, get acquainted parties, and all sorts of activities geared towards people with hearing loss.

It will be held at the Opryland Hotel, June 18-21. There is an early bird registration which saves about \$100 if you register by December 31.

Meeting adjourned at 11:42a.m.